Utah Department of Human Services Quality Improvement

HISTORY OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEES

Utah's Quality Improvement Committees were first outlined in the Performance Milestone Plan in May 1999 when the Division of Child and Family Services (Child and Family Services) was under the jurisdiction of the Federal court. This was due to a class action lawsuit brought by the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL).

The class action lawsuit was based on a number of circumstances of great concern. The concerns related to appropriate training of caseworkers, manageable caseloads for caseworkers as well as Assistant Attorneys General (AAGs), Guardians ad Litem (GALs) and juvenile court judges. The concerns also related to recruiting foster parents and providing them with quality training and other supports. Child Protective Services (CPS) investigations needed to be improved as well as foster care programming.

The Performance Milestone Plan (the Plan) was intended to be the business plan for needed improvements to Child and Family Services and the larger child welfare system. One of the most innovative items within the Plan was the creation of Quality Improvement Committees.

Utah Department of Human Services
Quality Improvement
Committees

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Improving
Services
for
Utah's
Families



QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEES MEET MONTHLY TO:

- REVIEW TRENDS AND OTHER
 RELEVANT DATA
- MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
- WORK ON QUALITATIVE CASE
 REVIEWS AND SPECIAL STUDIES
- ADDRESS MEDIA AND PUBLIC
 RELATIONS ISSUES
- ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN,
 YOUTH, FAMILIES AND STAFF



Welcome!

YOUR INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION IS VALUED AND APPRECIATED

Welcome to the Quality Improvement Committee! As a new member, you may be wondering, "What is this committee really about? What am I supposed to do?"

Child and Family Services has Quality Improvement Committees in all geographic regions of the state. These committees are made up of community partners who have a stake in the outcome of services provided to children and families. The child welfare system relies on far more than "just" Child and Family Services. Law enforcement, schools, medical providers, mental health providers, substance abuse providers, the courts, the legislature, and others provide vital services to children and families in need.

Each month, you will review information and data that measures Child and Family Services' performance and will discuss systemic problems that affect children and families. Quality Improvement Committees also serve as the citizen review panel for Child Protective Services (CPS). Funding for CPS citizen review panels comes from a federal grant. Thus, your committee will review CPS issues at least **once each quarter**.

It is your mission to be informed evaluators who will ask the hard questions and make recommendations to inform system improvement.



ROLES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

SUPPORTER

Committee members may have heard a lot of information about retention and morale issues related to Child and Family Services employees. The committee may decide to host a luncheon or an awards event to recognize employees as a sign of appreciation.

ADVOCATE

When the committee has concluded that there needs to be a legislative change or additional funding, they may ask a member to speak at a legislative hearing, or to contact individual legislators to express concerns. Sometimes, community members hold more weight with legislators than do state employees.

PUBLIC AND MEDIA RELATIONS

One of the most important roles of the committees is to interact with the media and the public on issues relating to child welfare. For example, after studying an issue, a committee may conclude that broader public attention is needed. A reporter could be invited to the committee meeting, or some members might seek out an interview.

REVIEWER AND EDUCATED CRITIC

Committee members are encouraged to participate as reviewers in Qualitative Case Reviews (QCRs) that occur in each of the five regions. This is at least a two-day commitment, but is an excellent way to become much more "immersed" in understanding the casework dilemmas, complexities and the practice Child and Family Services expects from our staff.

Recommendations lead to positive improvements

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION PROCESS

Quality Improvement Committees have evolved to the point that recommendations are coming from across the state about a variety of issues. This is a sign of positive growth. Once a committee completes their study of an issue for improvement, it must be determined if the recommendations pertain only to a region or whether the issue is of statewide concern. Many recommendations can be addressed within the region.

If the region does not have the ability and authority to proceed with implementing recommendations or if the recommendations require:

- · Additional funding
- Legislative changes
- Practice Guideline changes
- Human Resource rule changes

these recommendations should be sent to the region as well as to the state administration.

Once written recommendations are received, a region and/or the state administration has 30 days to respond in writing. All recommendations and responses are posted on the Quality Improvement Committee website: utahqic.utah.gov

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

EFFECTIVE CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IS

ESSENTIAL TO HUMAN SERVICES

Two types of committees exist: State and Regional Quality Improvement Committees. Each committee strives through its membership to reflect the diversity seen in Utah's communities. Each committee elects a chairperson. All existing members may recommend new members to their committee chairperson. There is great value in having foster parents and former consumers of Child and Family Services serve as members of the committees.



The State Quality Improvement Committee includes members from private, non-profit, partner groups, local businesses, the professional community, one Guardian ad Litem representative, and two people from the Child and Family Services state office.

Eight regional committees are currently chartered with a membership including an Associate Region Director or other region administrator and community individuals from partner groups, the private sector, local businesses, and the professional community.

Child and Family Services staff arrange for the logistics of committee meetings and for any applicable travel reimbursement for the community volunteers who serve on these committees.